

4th Grade Grand Prize Winner

Crosby: A Texas Community History Worth Saving

By Nicky McAnespy

Crosby, TX



Crosby: A Texas Community History Worth Saving

Crosby, Texas is a very interesting place. It is my hometown and where I was born. But, before that it had a very long history. It should be preserved so more people find Crosby special. Here are just a few things that make Crosby special in Texas history.

Crosby was first settled by an Irish immigrant named Humphrey Jackson. He was one of Stephen F. Austin's "Old Three Hundred" given land in 1823. Before Texas was even a state. He was given a League and a Labor (1) of land on the San Jacinto river 8 miles from Houston. He brought his wife and children. That is where Crosby is today! His tombstone is in Crosby. It is the oldest grave in all Harris County. There is a Historical Marker for him. People may not know that.

Crosby has lots of Czech history. In 1800 and 1900s many settlers came here. Mostly from places in Europe such as Slovakia, Bohemia and Moravia. They came here to plant farms, raise cattle, and have big families. Many are still here! Many old street names in Crosby are Czech family names. We have a big Czech festival every year. We love their good food like sausages and kolaches which are a sweet treat.

Once in time Crosby was a truly Texas railroad town. A place for rice, cotton, and also trees for wood. Crosby was a real city when a train station was built here. The railroad in Crosby started a post office, stores, cotton gins, schools and churches. The Texas & New Orleans Railroad made lots of business with Louisiana buying and selling things. Everything from Texas stopped here. This helped Crosby and Texas grow!

Crosby was even named for a railroad business man named Josiah F. Crosby (2). He was a Judge and important Texas lawyer too.

Crosby has a part of town called Barrett (3). First it was Barrett Settlement. Then it was named Barrett Station. It was a "Freedmen's Town" a place for freed slaves after the Civil War. Many families of these successful settlers live in Crosby today!

Crosby is having a 200 year Bicentennial in the year 2023. Everyone is looking forward to it! Crosby has a Historical Society opening a museum very soon (4). There are also interesting books about Crosby history. They have many old pictures that are Texas history.

These are only a few things about Crosby history worth saving! It is my community but I like to think Crosby is everyone's community. We love our great State's history and all the different people who came here from everywhere as fast as they could. (DM)

(1) My house and my neighborhood is there now. A League = 4,425 acres and a Labor = 177 acres is from old Spanish days. It is 7 square miles now! Stephen Fuller Austin from Virginia was The Father Of Texas.

(2) The reason for Crosby's name is a thing many places get wrong. Including the Texas State Historical Association in the Handbook of Texas. But it is true.

(3) Barrett was started by a freed slave a man named Harrison Barrett. Barrett family are still in Crosby. Crosby and Barrett are both Census places. But we all think of each other as Crosby. It says Crosby on our mail and we all go to CISD schools.

(4) The Crosby Historical Society has a page on Facebook it is at <https://www.facebook.com/Crosby.Historical.Society.Crosby.Texas>

Bibliography of things about Crosby

1. Old Three Hundred and Humphrey Jackson https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Three_Hundred and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humphrey_Jackson https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/jackson_humphrey

2. Crosby facts https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crosby,_Texas https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/crosby_tx

This is the man Crosby is actually named for. But his real middle name was Fraser. <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/crosby-josiah-frazier>

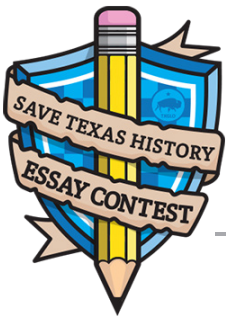
3. Barrett, Texas https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/barrett_tx https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barrett,_Texas

4. Crosby (Images of America) by Jody Fuchs A 2021 book by Arcadia Publishing <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1540245586/>

5. *Two Hundred Years of Crosby History* by Jody Fuchs. 2020, Crosby Historical Society. A very large color book that is at the Crosby Edith Fae Cook Cole Branch Library. It is a Harris County Public Library. <https://www.chron.com/neighborhood/lakehouston/news/article/Author-showcases-200-years-of-Crosby-history-to-14559511.php>

6. *Crosby's Heritage Preserved 1823-1949* by Edith Fae Cole, 1992 was by the Crosby-Hu man Chamber of Commerce <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0006QRST4/>





7th Grade Winner

Preserving Rockport's Shrimping History

By Avi Singleterry

Rockport, TX



Preserving Rockport's Shrimping History

Rockport is a historic town. There have been many historical events that have taken place in Rockport. The thing I believe to be Rockport's defining aspect through all of its history, though, is its shrimping. Rockport's iconic shrimp boats have inspired artists and even musicians for decades. Simon Micheal and Steve Russell were among the first to help turn Rockport into the artist colony it is today, their favorite subjects being shrimp boats. The shrimp boats also inspired such musicians as Guy Clark and Townes Van Zandt to write songs such as Shrimp Song and The South Coast of Texas. But when the shrimp boats dotted the horizon is little more than a nostalgic memory today.

When Rockport was founded right after the end of the Civil War in 1867, it was used for slaughtering cows, and as a packing and shipping port. During the 1880s, boat building and fishing started to become important industries for Rockport's economy. Later, in around 1925 to 1930, the shrimping industry began to also develop into something important to Rockport's economy. By the 70s and 80s, commercial fishing and shrimping was booming in Rockport. As a matter of fact, my grandfather moved to Rockport then because of the fishing and shrimping. As a very young man, with no skills and little education, he was able to get a job working on a shrimp boat and made good money to support his family. Due to several contributing factors, though, the number of shrimp boats in all of South Texas has drastically decreased since then. While there were 3052 licensed shrimping boats in Texas in 1988, there were only 345 licensed shrimping boats in 2019.

A question arises from these facts: What is the cause of this decline of commercial shrimping in Rockport? There are a few different reasons. One reason, some shrimpers say, is that many younger people of this generation don't seem interested in ever working on a boat. With all advancements in technology, many of them are probably interested in what is new, or are possibly not educated on the importance of the commercial fishing industry. Another reason why the shrimping in Rockport is in decline is because of the rising prices of fuel, ice, and other supplies, making it harder and harder to manage a fishing or shrimping boat. Another reason is because shrimpers have to compete with nearby farmed shrimp, and imported shrimp from Asia and Central America. Farmed shrimp are inferior to freshly caught wild shrimp because they are farmed in crowded conditions, and when farmed in crowded conditions, their immune systems are weakened, making them much more vulnerable to disease. Imported shrimp is cheaper to get and buy than fresh, local, wild shrimp, but it is also much lower in quality. Imported shrimp are lower quality because they are usually farmed shrimp, and also because they can be contaminated with illicit antibiotics. A 2015 Consumer Report found that of 205 imported shrimp samples, 11 from Vietnam, Thailand, and Bangladesh were contaminated. Another major contributing factor of the decline of



Rockport's shrimping is that in 1995, due to pressure from environmental lobbyists, Texas authorities began to reduce the number of shrimp boat licenses that they would provide. Less shrimp boat licenses mean less shrimp boats, and less shrimp boats mean less shrimp.

Shrimping is not only important for the fishermen and the shrimpers, but also for businesses in the area. Seafood restaurants need good fresh shrimp and fish to cook and sell. Fishermen and sport fishermen need bait. Rockport today has a very tourism driven economy, but our tourists are disappointed to find that many local restaurants do not have locally sourced fresh seafood. If shrimping and fishing returned and was used to provide fresh seafood to those restaurants, our visitors would be more pleased, and it would greatly enhance tourism. A couple of years ago, my family and I went on a vacation to the Gulf Coast of Florida. The place we visited had a balance between tourism and commercial fishing for their economy. The seafood we had there was delicious because it was freshly caught. They also had many different tourist attractions. I believe that Rockport could be like that, but we need to revive our commercial fishing and shrimping industry, and use it to provide our restaurants with fresh seafood.

All in all, Shrimping really put our town of Rockport on the map. It brought fresh seafood to our restaurants, gave us bait for fishing, attracted visitors and workers, inspired many artists and musicians, and built up our economy. Without it, all of the things I just mentioned would not have happened. I believe that we need to stop not only the history, but the practice of commercial fishing and shrimping from declining, and preserve it, because it is what really built the town of Rockport. (AS)

Bibliography:

<https://www.caller.com/story/news/local/2019/10/18/south-texas-shrimpers-cling-culture-industry-shifts/378760002/>

https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMT4YE_Rockport_Harbor_Gulf_of_Mexico_Rockport_TX_USA

<https://www.cityofrockport.com/393/History>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/27/shrimp-fishing-decline-georgia-environment>

<https://oceana.org/blog/5-facts-will-make-you-think-twice-about-eating-imported-farm-raised-shrimp/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2001/05/02/dining/two-breeds-of-survivor-gulf-shrimp-and-texas-shrimpers.html>